

DISAPPEARING FARMER'S TAN



Monster House Press
Columbus, Ohio
Bloomington, Indiana

MHP-003

Poems by Ryan J Eilbeck

Monster House Press

Columbus OH

Bloomington IN

Printed in the USA

1st Edition Oct 2012 © Monster House Press

Cover photo: Hillary Jones

Layout: Ryan J Eilbeck

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Where

For my Grandmother Donna Eilbeck who told me I could write

Small

When I was small

I learned to talk

and then I learned to walk

Now I am 8 and I can

Write.

My many thanks to: James Payne, Hillary Jones, Richard Wehrenberg, Jr.,
Lindsey Gibson, Caitlin McGurk, Austin Eilbeck, Pat Crann.
Without you, this work would not have come together.

At the Sandbar (Drinking with the Ocean)

Three kids wait with arms linked

red rover, red rover is the tide getting lower?

Or will you rise?

Blues breaking in your eyes.

The glass fringe gulps at their ankles

and tumbles the lottery sand.

They giggle from the same belly,

shoulders shrugged up like knowing the killer

in a movie will soon pounce from some square of dark.

A worthy swell drives toward them and they scream

blinking faster, shying almost away,

pants rolled up but too low.

The wave leaps up like the dog told no

licking their chins, leaving sun-splashed

globes hanging from their hair like mini-fishbowls.

Pure though planned surprise,

laughter soaks the air.

Half a mile down,

a drunk and shirtless man confronts the whole Pacific

Come on...

Is that all you got you Mother Fuck-er salty pud

Show me a storm you kiddie pool of piss

He pats his burnt chest just below a gold cross

flexing his arms,

wrapped in the vines of dull green tattoos.

I walk out to sea and I stand,

feet sinking into the sandbar

between blind wonder and a slur

at this world that holds me; a link

on the same chain.

The ocean sees it all the same.

Not fair - just there.

Boats called for lost lovers,

brands on beer bottles,

California;

all our names swallowed the same and never said.

Yet here I dare to ask you a question

mood ring of the moon,

are you all talk or all stomach?

Time piece, time annihilator

advancing just to sweep your tracks

as if to divorce your roaring mouth,

your violent face that pushes land back.

Three kids kick at the water.

The drunk man turns to the parking lot.

A peace I don't trust weaves through my toes.

Love Bite

"Play the field," my Grandmother said,

family pictures on the fireplace,

Granddad reading the paper silently.

"Only get married if *you can't stand it.*"

I hear it again in my head when

I spy a red galaxy shaped like Cape Cod

on my little sister's neck.

Curling iron? No, not her style.

Bruise? Right- Ok. Okay.

I ask if it's paint. She shrugs a little.

His description is mostly a disclaimer.

My brotherly advice is akin to Grandmother's:

That boy is a baby bird, you like chewing worms?

He won't leave the branch, but you, well,

you've got the hawk's span baby- soar.

My Grandparent's are in their eighties.

They drink tea for two in the breakfast nook.

They still hold hands, play their trombones together,

watch the bird feeder more than the T.V.

They couldn't stand it.

Charles's Cats

"They'll be fine," he said
about separating the cats,
"Just like people do."
Somehow, I knew her father
had told our fortune,
I'd written it down.
There would be new homes
apart.

The tinctures of skin secrets
fit in a casserole dish.
I padded it with her clothes, then placed
it in a shopping bag by the door.
I should swing by, a book shelf
holds some things I left behind.

"My Dad hates these cats," she said,
kneeling in the driveway, combing her
fingers through their clumped fur,
yet he kept them fed and near the yard.

When his kids had all moved out, when
she lived with Mom instead, when
yard work replaced dating, did he feel Feline?
Did he rub his side on the futon, same as a leg?

Scampering cats
chasing string and laser light,
one is more than nine lives.

If I Must (Then I Must Be)

*"Yours is the earth and everything that's in it,
And--which is more--you'll be a Man, my son!"
- If-, Rudyard Kipling*

You are the grandson
and so, by way of life to life
you must qualify as a son too.

Have you run through the ribbon of 18?
Then a man you may be.
Named by the draft
or job applications;
by the God who classified the giver of the rib,
falling with all our weight.

A man, my son
and a grandson-

duty lives on your earth worn halo
like rust on the lawn mower blade.
Hands for the hammer, the steering wheel, certain weapons
remotes, the spread wings of newspaper, signatures and handshakes.
Today, they are to grip the smooth oak bar
on the side of Papa's coffin.

I didn't know I'd be called to the flank of his rest.
Called to lift, as a man
to carry,
to hoist and place.
A knot in the even number of ties, because I was,
showing my hard face in despair's sport,
because *I am*.

So I was, a man.
Like a place to hide.
Like a pebble in the foot of a knight's armor,
breezes blowing cold from the hollow torso
down through the corridor of legs.
I was the mask set to steel bravery
barely merciful, even to the sword.
The man was holding eighty years of life
lightened in the journey toward something eternal.
The man walked steady and did not cry.
I was there somewhere too,
tacked loosely to the shadow of it all,
trailing behind the cape,

the man.

Nosta-whata

I read the sign "Baseball Nosta-Lodge-EEA,"
and bought a Giants hat from it.
I was eleven; hadn't broken up with the game yet,
out for a week-long tournament
in the red-stitched village called Cooperstown.

Good dim days,
so full with *now* (well, then)
that the Hall of Fame, wall-to-wall with black and white,
home to dead men's faces living in bronze,
couldn't stir that yet-to-be named feeling,
that Grand Slam
from the moment someone says,
"Things were better then."

I read it "NOST-eeii-LO-GIA,"
like the name of a native tribe.

Nostalgia. Sold to you often.
Hand-written movie intros like the scratches you've
had in your notebook for years,
the old songs of bands churning out jokes of themselves
like run-out Coke in the soda fountain,
the throw back this or that,
uniform / ball hat,
the vintage-classic,
barbed hooks on things you never knew could sing.
Of all the things to guard in the world,
we keep vigil for Nostalgia.

We try to contain the Big Bang of our
NOW / THEN consciousness, the out-of-sight
expansion towards former planets
and unnamed galaxies.
It gets blurry, plastic wrapped,
too sad to buy back.
I forget what I had,
I forget why I'm sad.

A Giants hat; it blew out the car window.
I was screwing around on a family vacation.
A week later, my Dad crossed
eight lanes of highway to get it back.
I waited in the car, idling on the shoulder,
hazards throbbing as he nimbly sprinted
to retrieve that small piece of me.
I saw it last in a laundry pile next to a dresser
filled with my old baseball cards; the valuable ones
in plastic sleeves, hiding in a blue box that
says my name.

The Animals Run

The body.
The balance.

No amount of prayer or good faith
alone can keep the temple intact.

Whatever higher powers may flicker,
running reminds
you are the immediate master of your body.

You must know this.

Your frame raised to one day break
the pace of the walk.
For Sport? Survival? Health?
All lean toward wellness.

Not even the Cheetah,
cocky with spots,
wounding ground with its claws
can outlast.

Not the Gazelle,
made by science or God,
with gold medal grace all creatures envy,
the lightness and lack of effort in its legs;
it's been told that we go longer.

My legs make their rhythm
with no clock arms to guide,
pistons burning something
in my sad silent place.
I breathe in my city earnestly, thick.
My life, my love
family, animal
plant you are nearer to me.

The run slows to jog, then walk,
my breath shooting out like Roman candles,
the insides keeping me alive screaming
like an error in Operation.
They say, I am here. I am yours. You are livin
What have you done (it does not matter)
Where will you run?

Calling the vet

Of course they were doomed,
born with a curse; the whole litter mewling, cradled by
the torn out seat-stuffing in a hearse on flat tires.

Of course we took them; a chance to be gods and healers,
our internal boggle turning like mileage to spell "Mom."

We boxed them on blankets and sweatshirts,
fixed a water teat to the side within reach,
administered formula feedings in a warm kitchen-

none of it mattered. The weak ones
died before the debate on names.

She was soggy-faced, her prize pick
wrapped in a cardboard coffin box
like a Christmas gift.

It weighed less than a Beanie Baby, its yellow eyes
shut beneath stuffed animal fur for always.
I dug a hole out front with a stone and tucked the box under
heavy mud clumps, then smoothed it over.

I bet their mother was out hunting
when we stole them; kidnappers with sympathy
hemorrhaging from our heads, visions of us in stride with nature
We, the dictators of soil, the taxidermists
asleep under sewn sacks of stolen feathers.
The door opening on our shoebox ambulance
sings a corrugated dirge.
With one arm like a sickle, the other a shovel,
doomed to bury everything we've touched.

Of course they were.

Hausfrau Haven (No Comforters)

Hungover
at
the
Laundromat;
everything on spin cycle.

COLD / COLD / MIXED LOAD

An Asteroids arcade game blinks
through its demo. Hand streaks
near the start button are more visible
than the screen. Its counterpart in the corner
is burnt out. Unplugged. Quit on.
Christmas music is four weeks early and I'm kind of singing
with thirteen quarters and two dryers going.
Nauseously, I identify the shirt I'd like to wear
the rest of the day; fading jeans that will soon
fit tight and right, belt-less.
Suddenly, the underwear. Not mine, alive,
somersaulting through the air like an acrobat,
leaping over and on top of *my* rightful clothes,
the white waistband smirking,
the bright blue briefs yelling HA HA
through the leg holes.
My stomach suds up and whirls.
The mismatched tornado tumbles on,
devouring the past in heated circles.

Free Pony Rides

The Amish boy leads the horse.
I wandered after the wedding vows
to find him mid-stride, reigns in hand
like a sacred book.
Boy, maybe eleven or thirteen,
the hired help to amuse special-occasion Christians;
what do you think of these metro-sexual thirty-year-olds
on the saddle as you guide your horse through the curated lawn?
Extravagant, the two of them in line
with undone tie, heels kicked aside like
going to bed together, smoking like, "Well, that was nice."
"Make it gallop!" One calls to the lady rider.
I squint, holding a half amber glass to the loosening sun.
Boy looks ahead blankly toward the valet
still cramming cars into small spots around the cul-de-sac.
The horse will not gallop under the spell of their words,
for their free time or pleasure; only if tugged the trained way.
The horse, obliging, works under control of boy,
eleven or thirteen.
See her legs shine like a buffed car bumper
spread wide over the horse's belly,
her bouncing earrings lassoing the bitable summer air.
Will boy fantasize about her at home?
On plain sheets under a shameful sweat?
Boy, I've done that. Laid in private lust;
felt grunts in me like a bull slamming the gate.

But I was your haircut; looks long, passed permission
but there's a cliff at the ears,
a falling feeling, a trip down to iron darkness,
a kickback from the shoe, my mind with hissing wings
like the quarter-sized flies circling the mane.
Where did you hide when the dancing began?
When the garter, worn high on the Bride's thigh
met the air, quivering with pink lace.
Where were your reaching hands?
I wonder what you know, Amish boy? No- I know you.
Our pants ride high above white socks;
a stiff farm hand stance, a starched blue shirt tucked in.
The young masters, calling trust a good grip,

clenching the loose leather linked to
a power cars claim to carry, the wild
veins rippling over the swollen joints of four sturdy legs.
The Amish boy loves the horse. He pats its side firmly
as the newly-weds crash cake into each other's mouth.
The slender face bows to eat from his hand.

Tenderness

I held the imitation anatomy
like a cooking spoon.

"Bigger than mine," I said,
fake putting it on upside down.

"It's curved," she said,
turning it right for me,
my hand around it
testing its weight.

She pressed a silver button and
the black sparkling wand started humming.
I laughed while ocean vibrations
coursed through my hand.
She looked beyond my shoulder,
half smiling.

It must feel wonderful; its duty
a footnote to passion, both bodies
feasting from a full plate.

Removable, I thought
as she hung it on the wall by the straps
near a scarf.

The most clever device;
Adam with the rotten parts totally invisible,
the beast of eagerness harnessed,
an unwavering institution of some syntheti

genius, really.

Sufficient, certainly
it is.

I left the bedroom like a secret
seeing its name everywhere,
the wall ornament
in the corner of my eye resembling
a ripe Japanese eggplant.

On The RD

I never liked *On The Road*.
Wait,
haven't read it-
Not even the Wiki page.
But I will tell you about it,
like Cliff's Notes (™?) minus more.
Some boys get in a car.
Their penises throb the whole ride
so they
throw them wildly (not surprisingly) to the wind
with consequence like a gas station in the rearview mirror.
They see *America*.
It's different than TV and
different than their town.
It's uglier/more beautiful/arguable/ponder-able
quite large,
like a buffet;
you'll want more than you can have
you'll take more than your share
you may leave sick
too much, never again
may come back
though Canada is an option.

There are drugs-
of course there are drugs,
maximum life calls for certain amounts of drugs.
Alcohol is there too, I'm sure
but it wears off you know?
You can't drink like you're 19 and get away with it forever
Jack-

Music, yes.

The corrupting kind that pockets the youth
and runs them right to hell,
right in rhythm
but never in line.
Someone put cover and spine to the scroll,
someone said NOVEL
like a library might file it domestically after Kerner.
Clerical collars were soiled,
drop-outs dropped out-er,
opiates showed up in the office,
jazz was new math,
school desk legs sprouted wheels
and kids drove them off while fucking.
I hear it was a good time
but my high school didn't assign.

My Mom (about)

My Mom Jazzercized
while pregnant with my twin brother and I.
JUMPING,
WOOOing,
WOO-HOO-hoo-ing with a Pat Benatar type headband on,
her hands all Tina Turner up-in-the-air.
She was kicking fat in the ass,
purple tights stretching hard around her big belly,
dancin' to the hits,
shakin' her hips and rockin'
our placenta worlds.
She quit the paralegal firm, not the Jazz
to raise us up right; making
PB and J perfection and packin'
pretzel sticks in a ziplock baggie.
She's the cool field trip Mom,
the *Oh no, I forgot to write a report on Gerald Ford, HELP ME Mom!*
The *I'm-only-cursing-cause-I'm-watching-the-Browns* Mom,
the master of that impossible two fingered whistle
heard for miles as we lost in almost every sport.
In another life, maybe as college roommates
in some crum-sized town,
I'd like to think we'd be friends; gossip grrrls,
secret spillers. We'd get high,
laugh at all the people who take life too seriously,
talk about books and sob together after Tylenol commercials.
I swear my Mom told me she smoked pot once.
Once? Me too.

The First Thanksgiving

Everyone is a cookie at the family table.
Born of the same ball of dough and kneaded
by my aunt's hands. Rolled flat, cut out as pumpkins;
laid to bed on a turkey napkin and tucked under
the same blanket of family frosting.

Our actual inhabited bodies are to sit at our coordinating cookie,
the names written in brown frosting, all caps,
font size and spacing showing her steady affection.
My outlaw uncle with the pilgrim's name
is to sit next to Kate; it's his new girlfriend.
Kate's cookie precedes her. It looks like all of ours,
but it's an outsider cookie; a cookie we don't trust yet.

We wait.

Their car pulls up the half mile driveway and soon, they enter.
I stare at her to decide if she is beautiful or not.
I say a lukewarm "Hullo." She seems at least friendly.
My uncle sees my long hair and says, "Are you a hippy?"
I say, "Yeah, I guess so."
Kate says, "I'm a hippieee!" And I assume
this means she wears more than one bracelet and knows
two or three surnames for marijuana.

She's very pretty and it's too obvious.
She looks like someone who might ride
a motorcycle in pre-ripped jeans. There's no hard chin
no hazel depth in the eyes, no little yellow scar
on the stubborn cheekbone,
no marathon capacity in the lungs.
I sip my wine and the cookies warp in the glass.
The pilgrims made a main dish of disease.
Marriage made a side-salad of divorce.
My aunt made a cookie for her ex-husband's new
blonde (fake, yes) girlfriend.
We all eat together. It's peaceful, like a grade school
reenactment of the first Thanksgiving.
We are polite, uncertain of details.

Health

I don't do video games these days.
In college, OK
yeah, on occasion.
I'm not better than anyone, I'm just saying.
Once, Santa won our faith with NES;
the only "it" gift I remember getting growing up.
"It" won us fake friends and zoned out sleepovers.
I remember this special opportunity
that most video games in that era granted.
You'd be fighting scum. It'd be going really bad.
You'd be taking kicks and bullets,
falling down shit, ass getting kicked.
Your guy would start blinking
because death was so anxious to body slam you
by the ninja mask.
Then... ..
HEALTH!
YES! You found it!
Maybe you had it hard and had to leap up
to some secret cloud or crawl down some crap hole for it,
but sure enough, it was there and made a boingy sound
when you downed it.
A pill. A beaker of bright juice. White square with red cross.
In Teenaged Mutant Ninja Turtles, it was pizza that healed.
Good deal.

Where is this in real time?
You say to me,
"You need to find a way to get spiritually and mentally healthy."
You've warp leveled to some sanctuary
riding the ROYGBIV peace streak in the sky.
Suddenly, all your advice smells like Sandalwood incense.
I'm scrape stained and black eyed
like Punch Out. Bleeding pizza sauce.
Yelling a lot, maybe crying.
These crazy half dude / half animals keep
head-butting me as I smash the 'A' button
desperate for some fungus to help me bulk up.
I'm blinking.
Health? A. B. A. B. AAAABBBB < ^ > > BA
low on life / low life

Hymns of the Morning

Early on summer days
I'd wake to my Dad's wedding band
clicking on the ivory keys.

His hymns would nudge me awake off the living room couch;
my camp site when AC was a luxury we still ignored as a family.
There was often no sheet music, no scrawled chord progressions guiding him,
just his hands knowing; finding the keys that agreed without looking.

At the time, it might as well have been
an alarm clock prelude to my chores, the signal that a break
from school could still be spoiled slapping paint on the peeling
exterior of our house as some lesson of work.

But now, I'd speak of this less harsh bugle call fondly.
I'd construct it into conversation so it appeared that
I was always smart enough to be grateful for this gentle waking.

Music. Sweet music, even before breakfast.
Sweet music before the brutal July sun and its thick hands of heat
could club me awake through the blinds.
Sweet music softly saying, the day is beautiful son,
the world is yours.

We; The Rockers.

Yeah, yea
I got my hackey sack
in a back pack
half inch corduroys
bowl cut head like the other boys.

My friends say they smoke weed
and so do their band tees,
but it's their older brothers who load up
an apple and rip from a black hole too big
for a worm to have made.

I saved twenty bills for an Everclear shirt
that hung on the wall at the one and only record store in
Berea, OHIO.
The year of ALT-rock, Nineteen-Ninety-Airwalks,
ugly people riding the radio waves.

Never heard the Grateful Dead
but wore their beanie on my head.
Caught it front row at the mall,
that skull with the red and blue,
did you see me? I see you, you, you
watching MTV on Gram's bed
in the cable sanctuary of youth.

At a sleep over we Oujjied by candle light

Jimi's spirit, voo-dooo child.

Morrison was way out of our realm.

Then Kurtd-

come back.

The girls with their eyes lined black, black light on a mushroom poster
in your lonely lava lamp room.

Squire Strat; my Messiah.

Sing.

Howl.

Get me further than this god-damned-mini-van.

Come get me, take me somewhere beyond,
to the clouds in a tie-dye sky,
where grimy sneakers make you fly.

It's More

I can't count the times

I've looked in the almost mirror;

a stretched out reflection of me escaped
from a funhouse hallway and into this realm.

It's the greyer eyes that give it away. Hairstyle,
posture, the longer face,
the extra inch-and-a-half in his reach.

"Oh, you're the fun one and he's more serious,"
people say, like it's science striking them.

The *this* one, the *that* one. Binaries that still earn
just one title: The Twins.

"So what's it like?"

God tore apart a blood orange, stuffed it through our ribs
and said, "Share."

Someone gave us the same birthday present
and said, "Surprise!"

"Are you telepathic?"

We have four bars in a national park,
color copy DNA like

Nature's best friend necklaces dangling inside,
swinging in a similar rhythm. It's understanding,
heavier than super power.

The Warm Days

"If I hit him, do you feel it?"

Depends on how hard you swing.

"What's the longest you've been away from each other?"

I drive toward the sun and see his face
in how I squint my eyes; in the lines on my forehead.
I speak with the merged tone of him and Cleveland.
I'm a tectonic plate, every shift or slip
will affect the other and in turn, the whole.

So let's eat and drink; too much us.
Here's my good times, confetti in your hair,
my sad times with salt for your cheeks too.
Here's to our never severed history,
our two lives stacked like a Dagwood
most couldn't stomach. More to protect.
To shape. To argue against. Figure out how to love.

"Which one are you?"

I am no one. Who are you?

The warmest days fade.

Summer's silver fish belly
turns yellow.

A knot of your hair and mine
in my sock somehow
like a smashed daddy-long-legs
as I dress in the morning.

My sad sign, sagging Scorpio
swings it's sting a lazy, low way
in Augusts' panting days.

I still expect the sun to rise above
the eastern apartment windows.
You and I under the dew of sweat on top of blankets;
the onions to say good morning as I cook on
the electric stove set to five.

Is this humble breakfast the victory
we must always repair?

Some days stretch before our eyes
and yawn though something inside us resonates
with a low hummed note.
Not a lullaby; memory with sound.
Feeling stuttering and crashing into itself.
Our train signals one station away, rumbling
closer now, like elephants coming home thirsty.
The walls shake, the earth feels small,

bedroom sized. It arrives with open seats and I ask
Do I love my total(ed) self?
Do you?
Do I, you?

I hug you as you're off to work, tucking
myself in your pocket, your souvenir,
a shark's tooth wrapped on a necklace.
Once fierce and belonging to gums of brothers,
now alone and thumbled for luck,
snagging all your clothes.

The last mosquito flew off fat.
We are dead eyes, two black seeds
in a locust shell,
God's drought maraca in a crescendo before the storm.
How can we go on? How can we not
count the seconds it takes the thunder
to say, 'Remember lightning?'
The rain is just, washing out the sidewalk.
A warm perfume rises from the dark-grey slabs.
The curbside stream floats up debris
and the smell is almost sweet. A
river, dead and new.

Brighten (the Corner)

"Brighten the corner where you are."

My Dad would say this.

Still says this.

He even sang the old hymn, tweaked a bit;
a revival for his special needs music class.

The corner; like the corner of a map (looks colorful)
the corner of the rug (careful vacuuming it)
the corner of your street and the next one (turn and walk to your friend's house)
It was always in the key of optimism.
A simple nugget of wisdom I carried as
Don't be an asshole or
Give kindness where no one expects it.

It still means this, I think,
but in a shadow.
It may be the darkest thing my Dad has told me.

The Corner.

Someone
Something
Life, presumably has backed you into there.

The Corner.

There is one way to look that is not part of CORNER,
that is, face to face with whatever has you pinned there.
You can look at *it* and only *it*. The only gallery,
the landscape that is very near yet somehow
wide-lens in your straight-on-vision and your peripheral.
There.

Brighten that spot.

Dust gathers there,
cat hair,
human skin,
pennies people throw away.
Very low things carry membership there.
Can you stand up there?
Be a man there, a woman there
a person there?

The Corner. The place where they stick a tube
in your Grandfather's side because he won't
admit he can't eat and it's gotten that bad.
The place I know my Dad has cried
though I've never seen it.
Where friends, who claim that title
in conversation, boast it on the internet,
violate your most sacred trust.
Maybe you've made the corner.
Where your life seems more like
the roadside of a national forest,
every torn apart thing
still smells, still stains,
a clump of fur waves on a bone
like a white flag.

You sing this heavy hymn
into the teeth of air.

Brighten the corner where you are

You will feel very incapable. You are mostly incapable.
Lanterns burn brighter in wind.
Your skin will look like the white wall paint
and you must say *glow*.

Nebraska

Sometimes I wake up and feel Nebraska,
the whole state sleeping hip-side on my sternum.
I feel the endless roads parting the flood of corn
after a harvest. I rise in line
with the straight standing ghosts, feeling
fellowship alongside their dry family. We are
split ends of the dirt, empty of duty and purpose.
I have no greeting for this day. I have nothing to say
to the sad souls of my friends that are stretched
so far that the tension is almost shouting
fill me, fill me
How can this state be so long? So, nothing
But somehow that nothing is just sadness
you can't name, a Grassman rumored-beast
that passes barely through the edge of a photograph
yet can draw everything into its shadowy stride.

I drive Nebraska on the double yellow line
till it disappears, like birthday candles blown out.
A gas station ahead looks hopeful.
Hours and hours till I arrive to the
pumps all off, not a soul in sight.
The road side sign flickers a fading
gold like a quitting moon.
Nebraska is the continued drive,
the needle resting on the orange,
prescriptions in a cabinet, a co-pay.
Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio.

Where

I need to see where the sun goes down,
whether it's between buildings
or a background to cranes and shovel trucks,
calling out their shadows like old-growth,
sinking in our crude progress.

I need it.

Not in the name of "The West" or
for an easier temperature to walk through,
but to be forgiven;
to see each arm hair illuminated by worth.
To see gold on my skin, skin that hasn't quit me
though it must know every fickle shade of my heart.

I need calm in the gradual bow of day that says
rest souls, all souls rest.
Work is over though the pavement is still hot.
Stop squinting, here's clarity.
This day's light will leave you as all things do
but its reverence won't abandon
if you stop to watch.
I must know where the sun goes-
Its falling disposition no artist could truly replicate.
The time when atheists sigh and subconsciously nod
to an invisible maker of all
stroking the sky with impossible colors;
the therapy of quiet orange,
the passion of cloud-dipped pinks.
I feel me unravel, almost a resignation.
Thought dissolves, guilt leaves me,
anxiety is cremated and scattered
to live on elsewhere.

Night comes and I'm not afraid.

Things I've thought awake are worse than any dream.

Things I've read or been told

are darker than the bottom of moonless night.

May I know where you go?

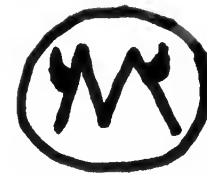
Where the hands that tuck you in hide?

Let me fade on the fingertip of your last ray.

Let at least my legs through your window sigh of relief.

Or is this retreat the ritual to survive us?

A secret, always only half revealed.





Ryan J. Elbeck resides in Berea Ohio. He is planning on a career in baseball. His skill as a catcher has already been recognized by Bleacher Authorities.

His earlier works are from manuscripts found in his first grade notebook. He shows promise as a good story teller... and poet.



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